



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDER
NAVAL METEOROLOGY AND OCEANOGRAPHY COMMAND
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13 Jun 01

MEMORANDUM FOR SPECIAL DUTY (OCEANOGRAPHY) OFFICERS (180X) AND
LIMITED DUTY (METEOROLOGY/OCEANOGRAPHY) OFFICERS
(646X)

Subj: SEA DUTY AND WARFARE QUALIFICATION POLICY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 1412.2G

1. My sea duty policy is very simple: **All 180X and 646X officers are encouraged to aggressively seek sea duty assignments throughout their career and to readily and willingly accept sea duty opportunities whenever and wherever available.**

2. Sea duty is not optional. It is an essential cornerstone of our community and it is directly aligned with the critical path we need to follow to fulfill our vision:

We will enhance our operating forces' ability to operate safely and dominate the battlespace through superior understanding and exploitation of the natural environment.

We will operate from a forward engaged and expeditionary posture.

We will remain world leaders in operational Meteorology, Oceanography, and mapping, charting, and Geospatial Information and Services (GI&S).

3. Operational time at sea on Navy platforms affords our officers a rich opportunity to experience the variety of battlespace environments that the Navy operates in. Your sea experience provides immediate and sometimes dramatic feedback on the various ways that platforms, sensors and weapon systems are affected by forces of nature. The only valid path leading to knowledge and understanding of warfighter METOC requirements is through personal operational experience on the bridge of ships, in CICs, on flight decks, in submarines, in naval aircraft and in landing zones. Sea duty experience is critical to sustain the relevancy of our community and to continue providing innovative, quality METOC products and services that enhance safety and optimize warfighter effectiveness. In our sea going billets we provide direct support to Fleet CINCs, Battle Group Commanders, Destroyer Squadron Commodores, Carrier COs, Carrier Air Group Commanders, Combatant COs, Amphibious COs, SEALs, and Marines as well as joint and combined forces. Don't ever perceive sea duty as a "check in the

block" for a promotion board; it is the heart and soul of the value we add to the Navy.

4. As a METOC Officer, you have opportunities to serve in five different types of sea duty:

(a) **Fleet Survey Teams (FSTs)**, FSTs deploy with a full data collection and field processing capability in response to emergent (or existing) fleet customer requirements. Teams consist of METOC officers trained in geospatial information and hydrographic surveying. Equipment includes Hydrographic Survey Launches, D-GPS positioning equipment, echo sounder, digital side scan sonar, portable multi-beam echo sounder, ancillary measurement equipment (CTD/SV, tides, etc.), along with PC-based GOTS/COTS data acquisition hardware and software. Teams produce field products onsite, tailored to customer requirements.

(b) **Mobile Environmental Teams (METs)**, located in Jacksonville, Pensacola, Norfolk, Pearl Harbor, Rota, San Diego, Yokosuka and Whidbey Island, provide "on-scene" support directly to ships, aviation squadrons, submarines, SOC forces, Coast Guard units and more. METs provide METOC support anytime, anywhere. METs are not tethered to any one platform and are employed in a wide spectrum of roles throughout the world. METs are the primary afloat opportunities for O-3s and below. We currently have 19 MET officer billets.

(c) **OA Division Officers** are found on 5 classes of ships: MCS, LHA, LHD, CV and CVN. All OA Division Officer billets are 0047/49 P-coded O-4 assignments. The METOC officers on all of these ships have the same title but have different support roles. On the MCS, the METOC officer supports Mine Warfare and all of the associated challenging littoral requirements and works closely with the Naval Oceanographic Office. On LHA and LHD class ships, the METOC officer supports Amphibious Warfare, aviation missions, SOC operations and the Marines. This can be a very challenging position working in the littoral region and providing support to multiple warfare areas. Additionally, this officer provides support to the PHIBRON Commander when embarked. On CV/CVN's the METOC officer supports the carrier CO, embarked staffs and squadrons. The carrier METOC officer is the head forecaster for this complex, floating airfield. Although they are called division officers, these officers' duties encompass much more than the title indicates. Each of them is directly responsible to the CO for operational safety and optimization of the carrier's effectiveness. Additionally, they routinely qualify and stand operational watches at sea along with their URL counterparts. We have 26 OA division officer billets.

(d) **CRUESGRU, CARGRU, and PHIBGRU Staff METOC Officers** support the Commanders of Cruiser-Destroyer, Carrier Group, and Amphibious Group Staffs. This billet requires a 0047/49 P-coded O-4. This

METOC officer is directly responsible to the Commander for all environmental issues within his AOR. The afloat staff officer coordinates all direct support to assigned ships and elements including special support for joint and combined exercises and real-world contingencies. We currently have 14 afloat staff officer billets.


(e) **Numbered Fleet Staff METOC Officers** represent the pinnacle of afloat METOC support. They provide direct operational support to these 3-star staffs. From supporting exercises to real world conflicts, these 0047/49 P-coded O-5s are involved at the apex of the operational warfighter realm. All afloat METOC support in the Numbered Fleet AOR is coordinated through this officer. We currently have 5 Fleet Staff officer billets. Command screening is required for assignment to a Numbered Fleet and Command Equivalent credit results.

5. The preponderance of our sea duty billets are at the rank of Lieutenant Commander and O-4 sea duty is a specific and important career goal. Your detailers will work very hard to ensure you get an equal opportunity to complete a sea duty assignment prior to going in zone for O-5 but you are ultimately responsible for managing your own career. Sea duty is a competitive assignment with a finite number of billets (i.e. not enough for every O-4). Sea duty assignment will depend upon your sustained superior performance throughout your career and the detailing triad (i.e. navy needs, career needs, and individual preference). Keep in mind that LCDR fitness reports close out on 31 October and the O-5 selection board typically meets in March of your 15th year of service. A good thumb rule is that you need to be at sea preferably before October of your 12 year point but no later than the 13 year point of your career. That basically only allows one shore tour as an O-4 before taking a sea duty assignment. Sea duty in our community is not optional but I also acknowledge that there will sometimes be exceptional circumstances that will preclude sea duty assignment (e.g. LIMDU, child-care hardships, NPQ for sea duty, etc.).

6. **Warfare qualification** is a complex issue within our community. My warfare qualification policy is as simple as my sea duty policy: **Warfare qualification is highly desired but not absolutely required in the career of an 180X or 646X Officer.** We are in fact "Line" officers and we are a direct warfighter support element. However, we are part of the Restricted Line and by definition are restricted in the performance of duty (i.e. not eligible for command at sea). Due to our various accession sources, I expect to maintain a mix of approximately 75% warfare qualified officers and 25% non-warfare qualified officers in our community. At the present time, reference (a) does not explicitly include 180X and 646X in the list of designators eligible to attain designation as "Surface Warfare Qualified." I believe that the implicit intent of the SWO

qualification instruction is not to exclude OA Division Officers assigned as ships company from qualifying as SWO but to prevent temporarily embarked ship riders from diminishing the rigor and duration of sea duty required to attain SWO qualification. I will continue to work with N76 for a revision of reference (a) to allow explicit inclusion of our 180X and 646X officers assigned as ship's company. Do not allow the limitations of this instruction to dissuade you from pursuing full qualification as a Surface Warfare Officer if time, priorities, and operational schedules permit. Attaining the "pin" should not be your sole objective and designation as a SWO will be dependent upon the Commanding Officer's interpretation of reference (a). Full immersion and integration in the operational Navy world while simultaneously providing the best possible METOC support to the warfighter should be your primary objective. The clear path to fulfillment of that goal is to attain as many operational qualifications as possible. Qualifying as Officer of the Deck, Command Duty Officer, Tactical Action Officer, and Battle Group Watch Officer are examples of the operational immersion I refer to. Selection board briefings and precepts will continue to ensure equal opportunity competition for promotion between those 180X and 646X officers who have had an opportunity to get warfare qualified prior to or after accession into our community with those officers who may not have had the opportunity. Your sustained superior performance in providing METOC support to the warfighter will distinguish you in the minds of the selection board members. Operational immersion leading to specific operational qualifications will be an objective metric used to assess your relevance to the warfighter.

7. These policies are intended to properly focus your attention on our mission and vision. Enjoy your time at sea because it becomes memory far too fast and I guarantee that you will relish those memories for the rest of your life.



T. Q. DONALDSON, V